



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
County Manager



Date: July 25, 2012
Board Meeting Date: October 2, 2012
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: John L. Maltbie, County Manager

Subject: 2011-12 Grand Jury Response- Still No Emergency Action Plans for Levee Failures In San Mateo County

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Board of Supervisor's response to the 2011-12 Grand Jury report titled: Still No Emergency Action Plans for Levee Failures in San Mateo County.

BACKGROUND:

On July 9, 2012, the Grand Jury filed a report titled: Still No Emergency Action Plans for Levee Failures in San Mateo County. The Board of Supervisors is required to submit comments on the findings and recommendations pertaining to the matters under control of the County of San Mateo within ninety days. The County's response to the report is due to the Hon. Gerald J. Buchwald no later than October 9, 2012.

Acceptance of this report contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Collaborative Community by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate County departments and that, when appropriate, process improvements are made to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

DISCUSSION:

Still No Emergency Action Plans for Levee Failures in San Mateo County

Findings:

Grand Jury Finding Number 1. All City and County dam owners fulfilled their commitments in response to the 2006-2007 Grand Jury report.

Response: The San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services agreed to the finding in their response dated July 31, 2012.

Grand Jury Finding Number 2. Foster City, Redwood City, San Mateo and the County of San Mateo worked with FEMA to bring some levees up to FEMA standards to meet insurance guidelines and thus avoid the classification of surrounding areas as floodplains.

Response: Agree. The County of San Mateo is only responsible for one levee in the County and it is located at the San Carlos Airport. The San Carlos Airport Levee Improvement Project was completed November 4, 2010. The Airport Levee Improvement Project was part of a larger improvement project to certify the entire levee system for Redwood Shores in the City of Redwood City (Redwood City).

Grand Jury Finding Number 3. There is a lack of consistency and varying amounts of detail among the EAPs completed by the cities.

Response: The San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services responded that they had not received all of the completed EAPs from the cities and could not agree or disagree with the finding in their response dated July 31, 2012.

Grand Jury Finding Number 4. The San Mateo County Levee Status from FEMA dated March 12, 2012 shows levees no longer exist in the cities of Belmont, Burlingame, and Pacifica, due to reclassifications and removal.

Response: The San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services agreed to the finding in their response dated July 31, 2012.

Grand Jury Finding Number 11. The County of San Mateo shares responsibility with San Carlos and Redwood City for the levees located in the vicinity of the San Carlos Airport.

Response: Partially agree. No formal Memorandum of Understanding was established between the Redwood City and the Airport (or "County"). The Airport authorized Redwood City to complete certain levee improvements on Airport property that connects the Redwood Shores flood control levee system. Redwood City performed the Airport levee improvements, acting as the lead agency, to improve and certify the entire levee system protecting Redwood Shores in order to meet FEMA's new levee height requirements. Levees that did not meet FEMA's new levee height requirement would have triggered mandatory flood insurance for homeowners with federally backed mortgages within those communities. As part of the authorization for Redwood City to make levee improvements on Airport property, the Airport agreed to assume future maintenance responsibility for that same portion of the levee on Airport property. In September 2010, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Airport's Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Manual.

Grand Jury Finding Number 12. The County Public Works Department did not develop an EAP for levees located in the vicinity of San Carlos Airport.

Response: Partially agree. The San Carlos Airport does not have a standalone EAP for its levee system, however, since September 2010 the Airport has adhered to a Levee O&M Manual. In addition to regular inspection and maintenance activities, incorporated within the O&M Manual are "Flood Emergency Operations and Procedures" which consists of response plans and flood fighting methods. The O&M Manual serves as a guide for operating procedures before, during, and after a flood emergency, as well as regularly scheduled maintenance to ensure the stability and integrity of the portion of the levee system on Airport property. Airport staff will submit the O&M Manual to the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and will support the preparation of a standalone Emergency Action Plan for the portion of the levee system at San Carlos Airport.

Recommendations:

The Grand Jury recommends to the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County and the city councils of East Palo Alto, Foster City, Redwood City, San Carlos, San Mateo, and South San Francisco that each of them:

3. Within a timeframe negotiated with OES, create, review, and update EAPs for levees in conformance to specific San Mateo County OES guidelines. These EAPs will include at a minimum:

- **A list of three or more separate telephone contacts to ensure at least one responsible official or responder is made aware of the emergency**
- **A protocol setting out actions that will be undertaken to mitigate danger during an emergency**
- **A copy of the most recent inspection report on levee integrity**

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The County of San Mateo is only responsible for one levee in the County and it is located at the San Carlos Airport.

Contacts for the County's portion of the levee system at San Carlos Airport:

James Wadleigh, Interim Airport Manager
(w) 650-573-3700
(c) 650-619-9001

Michael Wentworth, Deputy Director, Administration and Airports
(w) 650-599-1423
(c) 650-399-6292

James Porter, Director of Public Works
(w) 650-599-1421
(c) 650-954-3320

The San Carlos Airport has prepared a Draft Emergency Action Plan for the County's portion of the levee system and is coordinating with OES to incorporate the EAP into the Flood Hazard Annex of the County's Emergency Operations Plan.

Pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Division 2, Chapter 1; the California Emergency Services Act (ESA); and Homeland Security Presidential Directive / HSPD-5; the County of San Mateo adopted and implemented Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). These systems are the cornerstone of federal and state emergency response systems and the fundamental structure for the response phase of emergency management. These systems support the management of multiagency and multijurisdictional responses to emergencies in California by unifying all elements of California's emergency management community into a single integrated system and standardized key elements. Some of these key elements are the Incident Command System (ICS), California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement (MMAA), the Operational Area (OA). The OA is an intermediate level of the state's emergency services organization, which is defined as the County and all political subdivisions located within the county, including special districts. San Mateo County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) serves in the capacity of the OA Emergency Management Agency. The San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services was created by the Emergency Services Council, which is a Joint Powers Authority created by the 20 cities and towns in the County. It refers all emergency plans to the County Board of Supervisors for adoption. The OA coordinates information, resources, and priorities among local governments within the area and serves as the communication link between the local government level and the regional level Governing bodies of the county.

The San Carlos Airport will submit to OES any periodic inspection report it makes about the portion of the levee at San Carlos Airport. Further it will forward any evaluation it receives from the other agencies, such as the California Department of Water Resources or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

4. Forward updated EAPs to OES to be followed by annual updates.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. OES requires that all EAPs be received by December 31st of every year and accepts amendments to those EAPs until June 1st of the following year. The San Carlos Airport will submit an updated EAP to OES consistent with this schedule.

5. Direct the relevant city departments to work with the County Public Works Director and FEMA to identify, evaluate, and report annually on the integrity of levees in the County.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented. As the OA Emergency Management Agency, OES maintains copies of the levee certification, inspection

records, and EAPs for the levees within the OA. That being said, the responsibility for performing inspections, maintenance and operations, and obtaining levee certification/accreditation rests with the local agency with jurisdiction over the levee in question. Further it is the responsibility of that local agency to submit copies of the levee certification to FEMA in order to receive FEMA levee accreditation. This accreditation causes and update of the associated flood insurance rate maps to identify the flood-plain area as protected for the base flood. To receive levee accreditation, FEMA requires (44 CFR 65.10 – FEMA 1986) the local agency to provide a complete engineering analysis of hydrology, hydraulics, structural and geotechnical, and operations and maintenance schedules of the levee in question. Furthermore, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the US. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conduct periodic inspections through their flood prevention and levee safety programs, and FEMA performs periodic assessments to determine potential flood hazards. Each of these agencies will communicate with the local agency about their findings.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with accepting this report.